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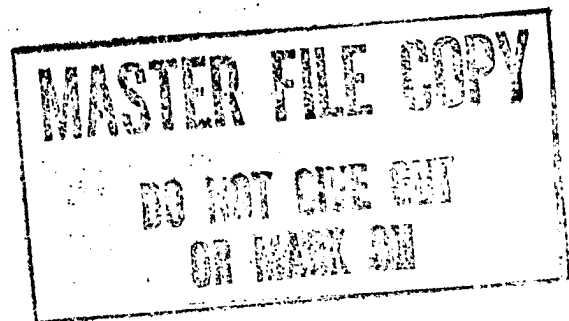
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Leftwing Terrorism in Greece: A Status Report

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An Intelligence Assessment



ARMY review
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March 1983

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**Leftwing Terrorism in
Greece: A Status Report**

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Key Judgments

*Information available
as of 7 February 1983
was used in this report.*

Greek acts of terrorism increased sharply in 1982, and, as in the past, most incidents were directed against US or US-related targets. Although the great majority of terrorist attacks—bombing and arson operations against buildings and parked vehicles—are apparently not intended to kill or wound, the possibility remains of inadvertent injury to US personnel.

[redacted] we expect that
the high level of terrorist incidents will continue through 1983. (S NF)

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Most Greek terrorists appear to be associated with the Revolutionary People's Struggle (ELA), a loose umbrella group composed of a myriad of subgroups. There appears to be considerable overlap in membership among these subgroups, and [redacted] the core group of the ELA may consist of only 20 to 30 people.

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[redacted] Compared with other West European terrorists,
ELA members seem untrained and their methods uncomplicated

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Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Key Judgments	iii
Background	1
Ideology and Political Objectives	1
Organization	1
The ELA and Its Affiliates	2
Foreign Links	3
Operational Characteristics	4
Threat Assessment	5

25X1

Appendix

Attacks by Greek Terrorist Groups, 1975-83	7
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Background

The Revolutionary People's Struggle (*Espanastatikos Laikos Agon* or ELA) was formed in 1971 to oppose through peaceful demonstrations the then incumbent military junta. During its formative period, the ELA was largely made up of students, and most of its activities took place on campus. It was only after the removal of the junta in 1974 that the ELA turned to terrorism. Taking advantage of the more relaxed security atmosphere and openly scorning the new parliamentary government and the legal left, the ELA made the transition from peaceful protest to urban guerrilla warfare.

Pointing to US economic power as a threat to Greek independence, the ELA began its terrorist activity with attacks against US targets. In April 1975 the ELA took responsibility for burning cars owned by Americans at Elefis Air Base. Since then the ELA and its affiliates have claimed or been suspected by the Greek police of responsibility for 108 terrorist attacks against US interests (see table). Almost all of these attacks have been directed against cars or buildings. The only American assassinated by ELA terrorists was Richard Welch, the CIA Chief of Station who was killed in December 1975. During 1982 ELA terrorists conducted their largest number of attacks against American targets in any year. The ELA has also conducted a smaller number of bombing and arson attacks against Greek Government and commercial facilities. In addition to these attacks on Greek property, ELA groups have conducted at least three assassination operations against Greeks, all of whom appear to have been closely tied to the junta.

Ideology and Political Objectives

ELA's ideology is a relatively unsophisticated collection of radical slogans and basic theories of an egalitarian society. An ELA communique issued in March 1982 described the organization's objectives as "anticapitalist,

anti-imperialist, and in favor of Communism." Greek officials say ELA's political aims are to:

- Create a new socialist society.
- Expose US and Western influence as inimical to Greek interests.
- Promote violent class conflict in Greece.
- Oppose conciliation between Turkey and Greece.

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ELA terrorists have attacked both US and Greek interests. Two ELA-affiliated groups, the Revolutionary Organization 17 November and the June 1978 Group, have claimed responsibility for assassinating two junta officials. The ELA assassination of the CIA station chief was designed, in our view, to exploit widespread publicity of US "destabilization attempts" against the Greek Government.

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Although the majority of ELA attacks against foreign targets have been against US facilities, ELA also has struck Soviet facilities to highlight opposition to certain Soviet policies (see appendix). In 1981 an ELA splinter group, Autonomous Resistance, took credit for several attacks on the Soviet Trade Mission in Athens and automobiles belonging to its employees.

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Organization

We know little about the structure of the ELA and its affiliated groups. the ELA membership is small, with perhaps as few as 20 to 30 members in its inner core. A larger number of individuals apparently maintain loose contact with the organization, collect information, obtain materials and funds for operations, and distribute propaganda.

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Greece: Terrorist Attacks Against US Targets

Year	Total Number of Attacks Per Year	Military Diplomatic Installations	Commercial Facilities	Privately Owned Vehicles	Assassinations	Miscellaneous ^a
Total	108	12	19	74	1	2
1983 ^b	1	0	0	1	0	0
1982	16	4	7	4	0	1
1981	15	0	1	14	0	0
1980	17	1	0	16	0	0
1979	1	0	0	1	0	0
1978	19	1	6	11	0	1
1977	19	2	1	16 ^c	0	0
1976	12	1	4	7	0	0
1975	8	3	0	4	1	0

^a Includes bomb threats.^b January through 15 March 1983 inclusive.^c Includes multiple-target firebombings, which were a popular ELA technique in 1977.

[redacted] We do not know how prospective members are spotted, recruited, and finally accepted. [redacted]

[redacted] ELA may be associated with a socialist activist organization called Group for a Proletariat Left (OPA), which is centered in university student communities. As a focal point for leftist activities on campus, OPA may spot and assess potential student recruits for the ELA and other radical groups. [redacted]

The genesis and organizational ties of many ELA affiliates remain unclear. [redacted]

[redacted] some of the affiliates originated in a split within ELA in early 1980. The oldtime ELA leaders formed several autonomous groups that have retained ties to ELA, including the Revolutionary Solidarity, Revolutionary Left, and Autonomous Resistance. [redacted]

[redacted] those terrorists who conduct operations under the name Revolutionary Organization 17 November may be in a leadership position within the ELA coalition. A communique issued by

this group in July 1981 condemned a series of large-scale arson attacks on department stores believed perpetrated by the Revolutionary Group October 1980, a newly formed affiliate. No large-scale arson attacks have occurred since the communique.

The ELA and Its Affiliates

Based on claims of responsibility for terrorist attacks, we believe as many as 15 groups, all espousing common goals and attacking similar targets, have been affiliated with ELA. Although most of the affiliated groups conduct similar types of actions, a degree of specialization is indicated by the assassinations claimed by two groups and the large-scale arson attacks claimed by one other. [redacted]

[redacted] some terrorists may be members of more than one group [redacted]

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We believe ELA terrorists also have used several names to confuse security forces and to inflate their apparent strength. The use of different names also inhibits law enforcement because, under Greek law, members of an organization are liable only for crimes attributed to the organization to which they claim membership when arrested. [REDACTED]

We have identified the following ELA affiliates:

- **Revolutionary People's Struggle (ELA)** claimed credit for numerous attacks against US military installations, including the firebombing of the US Air Force commissary in Athens in 1975 and the bombing of the NCO Club at Glyfada in 1977. ELA has claimed responsibility for attacks against US and West German commercial interests, Greek Government offices and public utility companies, and, more recently, Israeli targets.
- **People's Revolutionary Struggle (LEA)** surfaced at the same time as ELA. It has conducted firebombings against US-owned vehicles and Greek-owned facilities, especially in northern Greece around Thessaloniki.
- **Revolutionary Organization 17 November** appeared in 1975 and has conducted assassinations and firebombings. It claimed credit for the assassination of the CIA station chief in Athens in 1975, a junta police officer in 1976, and an antiriot police deputy chief in 1980. The authoritative tone of its communiqués suggests that this group may play a leadership role in the ELA.
- **Revolutionary People's Struggle June 1978 Group** claimed credit for the assassination in 1979 of an individual it claimed was a junta torturer. It has since been inactive.
- **Revolutionary Left (RL)** surfaced in July 1980 claiming responsibility for several firebombings of property belonging to Greek industrialists. RL has also claimed credit for firebombing vehicles owned by US servicemen. [REDACTED] RL appears to be loosely structured with no published objectives or goals. Unlike other groups affiliated with ELA, RL does not normally leave propaganda leaflets at the scene of attack.
- **Revolutionary Solidarity (RS)** made its first appearance in 1980 when it claimed responsibility for placing bombs in the Supreme Court building in Athens. We cannot positively link this organization with ELA, although its targeting is similar.
- **Revolutionary Group October 1980** surfaced in December 1980 when it took credit for firebombing two department stores in downtown Athens. Subsequent public claims from this group suggest that it has targeted vehicles owned by US servicemen. It has been inactive since the summer of 1981.
- **Autonomous Resistance (AR)** appeared in 1981 when it claimed responsibility for bombing and arson attacks on Greek commercial facilities. AR propaganda shows a strong anticapitalist, prolabor orientation. This group also claimed responsibility for attacks on the Soviet Trade Mission [REDACTED]
- **Peoples Struggle (LA)** has claimed credit for several attacks, including the attempted bombing at Deree College in Athens in April 1982. It alleged that the facility trained CIA agents.
- **Popular Fighting Front** first appeared in 1979 with the firebombing of automobiles in the Athens area. [REDACTED]

Foreign Links

[REDACTED] no foreign terrorist group has conducted operations in support of the ELA, despite frequent

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ELA expressions of solidarity with the West German Red Army Faction (RAF) and with Palestinian, Turkish, Iranian, African, and Latin American extremists. ELA groups, however, have given indirect support to the RAF. In 1976 ELA terrorists firebombed facilities of the West German firm Siemens in Greece to protest the Greek Government's extradition to West Germany of RAF terrorist Rolf Pohl. ELA attacked Siemens again in April 1981 to protest the death of RAF hunger striker Sigrid Debus. [REDACTED]

Operational Characteristics

ELA terrorist operations owe much of their success to the use of techniques used by Greek partisans during World War II:

- Strict security, meticulous planning, and careful surveillance.
- Minimal expenditures of manpower and materiel.
- Use of locally available or easily fabricated materials and equipment, which are normally not traceable by law enforcement authorities.
- Careful attention to escape and withdrawal.

The ELA employs a limited operational repertoire, which to date has included incendiary and explosive attacks against property and occasional assassinations. [REDACTED]

Most of the damage from ELA attacks has been caused by relatively unsophisticated incendiary devices, usually fabricated from such common materials as wristwatches, photo flashbulbs, batteries, and oil or gasoline. ELA terrorists are adept at positioning firebombs in areas where the ensuing fire will destroy the triggering device. The Revolutionary Group October 1980 escalated use of the tactic by setting fires in six department stores between December 1980 and July 1981. In this series of incidents, the terrorists planted incendiary devices in two separate stores and timed them to detonate some 20 minutes apart. Apparently this was deliberately done to divide fire-fighting resources and to ensure maximum property damage, which totaled some \$45 million. Unlike earlier attacks timed to occur when the stores were closed, the arson attacks in July 1981 occurred during the lunch hour. We believe the possibility of deaths of "working-class" Greeks in this series of attacks led to the condemnation of the tactic by elements of the ELA leadership and to the eventual halt of large-scale, department store arson. [REDACTED]

Explosive attacks by ELA terrorists have been less successful. The crudely constructed explosive devices often fail to detonate. Most ELA bombs consist of black powder packed into metal pipes or canvas bags with a homemade detonator; occasionally, dynamite and commercial detonators have been used. A few unclaimed attacks in 1977 involved military materiel which was unavailable locally. [REDACTED]

The timing of many ELA terrorist operations coincides with political events and anniversary dates. Visits of high-ranking US officials have often resulted in arson attacks against US facilities. Several US commercial concerns were attacked following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in mid-1982. The anniversary of the 1973 Athens Polytechnic uprising was usually marked in the mid-1970s by terrorist operations against both Greek and American interests. [REDACTED]

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Threat Assessment

We do not believe that ELA has significant popular support for ELA terrorist activities or sympathy for its Marxist-Leninist orientation. Nevertheless, we think the ELA terrorists probably believe that they can exploit anti-US sentiment on US basing rights issues, Greek involvement in NATO, and the Palestinian question. ELA has publicly announced its intention to oppose renewal of the basing rights by bombing the property of Americans. US military facilities in Athens and near Thessaloniki will remain potential targets. While these attacks will disrupt the negotiations, gain publicity, and apply psychological pressure, we believe they—like most past ELA operations against US interests—will be timed to minimize the possibility of personal injury. However, ELA terrorists have the capability to cause severe property damage and personal injury. Although we believe their attacks against the US presence will continue to be aimed at property, the risk of inadvertent injury or death remains. [REDACTED]

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In our judgment, the threat of assassination of US personnel is perceptibly less than the threat of attacks against US property. The one ELA assassination of a US national, CIA officer Welch, occurred during a politically unsettled period in 1975 following the overthrow of the junta. At that time, anti-US feelings were intensified by a widespread public media campaign against the CIA. Under the present political climate, we believe that any ELA assassination operation will probably be aimed at Greeks thought to have been involved with the junta. [REDACTED]

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Appendix

Attacks by Greek Terrorist Groups, 1975-83 ^a

Date	Type of Attack	Victim	Group
1983			
15 January	Firebombing	Privately owned vehicle (POV) (US)	
1982			
21 October	Firebombing	Hellenic American Union	Autonomous Resistance
2 July	Bomb (four)	American Express (two)	Revolutionary Popular Struggle
		Chase Manhattan	ELA
		Israeli commercial facility Travel office (Jewish connections)	
20 June	Firebombing	POV (US)	Revolutionary Action
2 June	Bomb (two)	Honeywell (US)	ELA
2 June	Bomb	POV (US)	ELA
2 June	Bomb	POV (mistaken for US cars)	ELA
21 May	Bomb	US Air Force base	ELA
30 April	Bomb	American Express (US)	
27 April	Firebombing	POV (US)	Revolutionary Popular Struggle
26 April	Bomb ^b	Deree College (Greek)	People's Struggle
26 April	Bomb (two)	IBM buildings (US)	Revolutionary Popular Struggle
2 April	Bomb ^b	US Ambassador's residence	Revolutionary Popular Struggle
1 April	Bomb	US Ambassador's residence	ELA
22 March	Bomb	POV (US)	
21 March	Bomb threat	USAF employee	Omikron Alfa
19 March	Arson	American School	
19 March	Bomb (two)	POV (two)	ELA
16 March	Bomb (two)	Citibank (US)	

^a The statistics in this appendix are drawn from our file of international terrorism and media reports on targets/victims that meet our criteria for an international event. These statistics are as accurate as the details of events allow.

^b Did not explode.

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**Attacks by Greek Terrorist
Groups, 1975-83^a (continued)**

Date	Type of Attack	Victim	Group
1981			
13 December	Bomb	Soviet Trade Mission	Autonomous Resistance
11 October	Bomb (three)	School buses (three)	Autonomous Resistance
22 July	Arson (two)	Supermarkets (Greek)	
8 July	Firebombing (two)	Department stores (two) (Greek)	Revolutionary Group October 1980
6 July	Firebombing (two)	Astir beach dressing rooms	Revolutionary Left
3 June	Firebombing (two)	Department stores	Revolutionary Group October 1980
27 May	Bomb	British Council	Greek Armed Group for Support of Northern Ireland
24 May	Car bomb	Car (US)	
18 May	Firebombing	Bus-Grundig (FRG)	Revolutionary Solidarity
13 May	Bomb	Police cars	ELA
5 May	Firebombing	Car/Component plant (US)	ELA
4 May	Bomb	Car (US)	ELA
24 April	Bomb (three)	Siemens (FRG)	ELA/Revolutionary People's Army
16/17 April	Firebombing (six)	POV (US)	Revolutionary Left
12 April	Firebombing	POV	20 October Leftist Group
3 April	Firebombing (four)	POV (US)	Revolutionary Left
3 April	Firebombing (two)	POV (US)	Revolutionary Left
27 March	Firebombing (four)	POV (two Soviet, one Bulgarian)	Autonomous Resistance
16 February	Bomb and fire- bombing (six)	Schoolbuses (six)	Autonomous Resistance
9 February	Bomb	Nestle Milk Company	Autonomous Resistance
27 January	Bomb	Zographics	Revolutionary Group October 1980
1980			
23 December	Firebombing	Tavern	
18 December	Firebombing (two)	Department stores (Greek)	Revolutionary Group October 1980
17 November	Bomb	US Consulate	
12 November	Bomb	Supermarket	ELA
30 October	Bomb	DEI (Greek)	ELA
17 October	Bomb	Social Welfare Board	ELA
16 September	Firebombing (four)	POV (US)	Revolutionary Left
16 September	Firebombing (three)	POV (US)	

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**Attacks by Greek Terrorist
Groups, 1975-83 ^a (continued)**

Date	Type of Attack	Victim	Group
1980			
9 May	Firebombing (nine)	POV (US model cars)	Revolutionary Left
15 February	Attempted fire-bombing	POV	
16 January	Assassination	Greek police officer	Revolutionary Organization 17 November
	Bomb	Supreme Court building	Revolutionary Solidarity
1979			
August	Bomb	City Bus Corporation	ELA
24 May	Firebombing	POV (US)	Popular Fighting Front
February	Bomb	Bus depot	ELA
31 January	Assassination	Greek security officer	Revolutionary Popular Struggle June 1978 Group
1978			
21 December	Arson	POV (US)	
21 December	Firebombing	POV (US)	
22 November	Bomb ^b	American Legion (US)	
18 November	Bomb (two) ^b	Coca-Cola	
18 November	Bomb (two, one exploded)	Trucks/plant	ELA
18 November	Bomb ^b		
18 November	Bomb	Inter-American Insurance Company	ELA
17 November	Bomb	Firm selling Soviet goods	
17 November	Bomb	Fair (SOV)	
7 June	Firebombing	POV (US)	
22 May	Firebombing	POV (US)	ELA
3 May	Arson	POV (US)	
28 April	Arson	POV (US)	
18 April	Arson	POV (US)	
12 March	Bomb	Theater (Soviet movie)	
11 March	Firebombing	POV (US)	
18 February	Arson	POV (US)	
22 January	Firebombing	POV	
22 January	Firebombing	POV (US)	

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**Attacks by Greek Terrorist
Groups, 1975-83^a (continued)**

Date	Type of Attack	Victim	Group
22 January	Firebombing	POV	
21 January	Bomb	US Information Agency	ELA
21 January	Bomb	American Express	
9 January	Firebombing (two)	POV (US)	

1977

23 December	Firebombing (seven)	POV	ELA
October	Bomb	NCO Club (US)	People's Revolutionary Struggle (LEA) ELA (dual claims)
23 October	Bomb	West German Consulate	
13 October	Bomb	Prime Minister's residence	
9 October	Bomb	NCO	ELA
8 October	Firebombing	POV (US)	
8 October	Firebombing	POV	
19 September	Firebombing	POV (US)	
10 September	Firebombing	POV (US)	
30 July	Bomb (five)	POV (US)	
14 July	Bomb	American Express	
14 July	Molotov cocktail	POV (US)	
14 July	Bomb	US Air Force exchange	
15 June	Firebombing	POV	
30 May	Firebombing	POV	
21 May	Firebombing	POV (US)	
11 May	Firebombing	POV (US)	
23 April	Firebombing (three)	POV (US)	
23 April	Firebombing	POV (US)	
13 April	Firebombing (13)	POV (US)	
26 January	Arson	POV	

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**Attacks by Greek Terrorist
Groups, 1975-83 ^a (continued)**

Date	Type of Attack	Victim	Group
1976			
15 December	Assassination	Greek police officer	Revolutionary Organization 17 November
13 November	Bomb	POV (US)	
13 November	Bomb ^b	Air Force exchange (US)	
13 November	Bomb ^b	POV (US)	
13 November	Firebombing ^b	Coca-Cola truck (US)	
October	Bomb ^b	POV (West German)	
14 October	Firebombing (two)	Siemens (West German)	
9 September	Bomb	POV (US)	
22 August	Bomb	Bank (Greek)	
10 April	Bomb	POV (US)	
10 April	Bomb	POV (US)	
10 April	Bomb	POV (US)	
3 April	Bomb	American Express (US)	
27 February	Bomb	American Express (US)	
27 February	Bomb	Chase Manhattan Bank (US)	ELA
12 February	Firebombing ^b	POV (US)	
1975			
23 December	Assassination	CIA station chief	Revolutionary Organization 17 November
10 November	Arson	US Air Force commissary	ELA
19 October	Firebombing	POV (US)	
18 October	Firebombing	POV (US)	

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